REMARKS

Applicant appreciates the time taken by the Examiner to review Applicant's present application. Applicant has cancelled Claims 1-29 and added Claims 30-58. Applicant respectfully submits that no new matter has been added. This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Official Action mailed September 20, 2004. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and favorable action in this case.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 & 103

Claims 1-29 stand rejected as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,148,355 ("Mahalingam"), or as obvious over ("Mahalingam") in view of U.S. Patent Nos. 6,189,063 ("Rekeita"), 6,661,236 ("Goers") or 6,214,068 ("Nolan"). Applicant has cancelled Claims 1-29. Consequently, Applicant respectfully submits these rejections are moot.

New Claims 30-58

Independent Claims 30, 42, 53

New Claim 30 recites a method comprising "providing a primary electronic component having a first identifier stored therein, wherein the first identifier includes branding information corresponding to the primary electronic component; providing a secondary electronic component having a second identifier stored therein, wherein the second identifier includes branding information corresponding to the secondary electronic component; coupling the secondary component to the primary component; comparing the first identifier to the second identifier; operating the primary component in conjunction with the secondary component if the first identifier is compatible with the second identifier; and operating the primary component without the secondary component if the first identifier is not compatible with the second identifier." Claims 42 and 53 recites similar limitations.

Thus, Claim 30 discloses a method for identifying brand compatibility between components. The primary electronic component has a first identifier including branding information, wherein the branding information corresponds to the identity of the person selling or manufacturing the primary electronic component. The secondary electronic component has a second identifier including branding information, wherein the branding information corresponds to the identity of the seller or manufacturer of the secondary component. The primary component obtains the second identifier corresponding to the seller or manufacturer of

the secondary component and compares it to the first identifier corresponding to the seller or manufacturer of the first identifier. The primary component can then operate in conjunction with the secondary component if the identifiers are compatible or operate without the secondary component if the identifiers are not compatible. In this manner, manufactures or sellers may insure that their components operate solely with other components which they have sold or manufactured regardless of the physical or logical compatibility of the components themselves.

For example, this method may allow the operation of a first component in conjunction with a second component and not allow the operation of the first component in conjunction with a third component, even if the second component and the third component are identical in every respect excepting that the second and third component are manufactured or sold by different entities, with the first and second component being manufactured or sold by identical or related entities while the entity which manufactures or sells the third component is not related or identical to the entity which manufactures or sells the first component.

In contrast, Mahalingam discloses a method for insuring the configuration of components is identical during hot swapping of components into a system. To achieve this, a system maintains a set of information on the various components on the system's PCI bus. When one of those components is removed and another component inserted into a PCI slot on the system, the system retrieves the vendor ID and the device ID of the inserted component from the component, and compares it to the vendor ID and the device ID in the set of information stored on the system which corresponds to the component which was previously in that slot. If those values are not the same, an improper swap has taken place as the newly inserted component is not identical to the previous component. Power to that PCI slot is removed and an error message is generated. If both the vendor ID and device ID are identical, the component is initialized and may operate. (*See* Col. 9, Lines 28-46)

Thus, the system of Mahalingam compares a vendor ID and a device ID of a previous card in a slot on the PCI bus to a newly inserted card in the same slot on the PCI bus, while the method of Claim 30 compares an identifier corresponding to the primary component to another connected component. In the system of Claim 30, the primary component is comparing the first identifier corresponding to itself with a second identifier corresponding to a secondary component, while in Mahalingam the system compares information related to a previously inserted component with information related to a newly inserted component, not with information corresponding to the system. Consequently, Mahalingam does not disclose a first identifier, wherein the first identifier includes branding information corresponding to the primary electronic component, and does not disclose comparing this first identifier including branding

information corresponding to the primary electronic component, with a second identifier including branding information corresponding to the secondary electronic component as disclosed by Claim 30.

Additionally in Mahalingam both the vendor ID and device ID of the previously resident component must be identical to the vendor ID and device ID of the newly inserted component (See Col. 9, Lines 38-40). In the method of Claim 30, however, the first identifier must only be compatible with the second identifier. Thus, in the method of Claim 30 the second identifier may contain branding information corresponding with one manufacturer or seller, while the first identifier may contain information corresponding to an entire set of manufactures or sellers. As long as the second identifier is compatible with the first identifier the primary and secondary component may be operated in conjunction with one another, even though the first identifier is not identical with the second identifier. Thus, as both the vendor ID and device ID must be identical in Mahalingam for the component to be compatible, Mahalingam does not disclose operating the primary component in conjunction with the secondary component if the first identifier is compatible with the second identifier, as do Claims 30, 42 and 53.

Dependent Claims 31 and 43

New Claim 31 recites the method of claim 30, wherein the secondary component continues operating if the first identifier is not compatible with the second identifier. Thus, in the method recited by Claim 31 though the second identifier is not compatible with the first identifier and consequently the primary electronic component and secondary electronic component do not operate in conjunction with one another, the secondary electronic may continue operating. For example, suppose the secondary electronic component is coupled to both the primary electronic component and a third electronic component. Though the primary electronic component and the secondary electronic component do not operate in conjunction with one another the secondary component can continue to operate in conjunction with the third electronic component. Claim 43 recites similar limitations.

In contrast, Mahalingam discloses a method for insuring the configuration of components is identical during hot swapping of components into a system. To achieve this, a system maintains a set of information on the various components on the system's PCI bus. When one of those components is removed and another component inserted into a PCI slot on the system, the system retrieves the vendor ID and the device ID of the inserted component from the component, and compares it to the vendor ID and the device ID in the set of information stored on the system which corresponds to the component which was previously in

that slot.   If vendor ID and the device ID of the component previously in a slot are not identical to vendor ID and the device ID of the newly inserted component, power to that PCI slot is removed and an error message is generated. Thus, the newly inserted component cannot continue to operate, as power to that PCI slot has been removed. (*See* Col. 9, Lines 24-45)

As the newly inserted component of Mahalingam has power removed if the vendor ID and device ID do not match, Mahalingam does not disclose the secondary component continues operating if the first identifier is not compatible with the second identifier as disclosed in Claims 31 and 43.

Dependent Claims 37 and 48

New Claim 37 recites "coupling the secondary component to the primary component comprises coupling the secondary component to the primary component via a first interconnect which is configured to transfer data between the secondary component and the primary component during normal operation and via a second interconnect which is configured to transfer data between the non-volatile memory and the primary component for the purposes of comparing the first identifier to the second identifier." Claim 43 recites similar limitations.

Thus, Claim 37 discloses two distinct interconnects, the first used for data flow when the primary component and the secondary component operate in conjunction with one another during normal operation, and the second used for comparing the first identifier to the second identifier to determine if the primary component and the secondary component should be operated in conjunction with one another.

In contrast, Rekeita discloses a system for proxying configuration register accesses to a secondary PCI bus. Because of physical limitations inherent in a PCI bus (See Col. 3, Lines 30-33) allow only ten devices on any particular PCI bus, another PCI bus must be coupled to the PCI bus to allow more PCI devices to be added. These PCI buses are coupled to one another using a PCI bridge. In Rekeita, this PCI bridge is used to determine whether reads to configuration registers on a PCI device should be trapped or passed through to the device. (*See* Col. 5, Line40-55)

As both buses in Rekeita are PCI buses, both of these PCI buses are coupled to one another, both PCI buses are used to transfer both requests and responses for configuration information, and additionally both PCI buses are used to transfer data to the PCI devices during normal operation, Rekeita does not disclose coupling the secondary component to the primary component includes coupling the secondary component to the primary component via a first interconnect which is configured to transfer data between the secondary component and the

primary component during normal operation and via a second interconnect which is configured to transfer data between the non-volatile memory and the primary component for the purposes of comparing the first identifier to the second identifier as disclosed by Claims 37 and 48.

Dependent Claims 32-36, 38-41, 44-47 and 49-52

Applicant respectfully submits that dependent Claims 32-36, 38-41, 44-47 and 49-52 are further limitations on patentable claims and are therefore patentable as well.
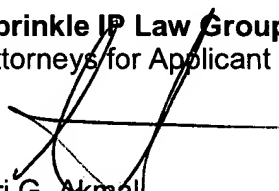
CONCLUSION

Applicant has now made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. Other than as explicitly set forth above, this reply does not include an acquiescence to statements, assertions, assumptions, conclusions, or any combination thereof in the Office Action. For the foregoing reasons and for other reasons clearly apparent, Applicant respectfully requests full allowance of Claims 30-58. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number listed below for prompt action in the event any issues remain.

The Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is hereby authorized to charge any fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-3183 of Sprinkle IP Law Group.

Respectfully submitted,

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